

# **A real-time spatio-temporal data exploration tool for marine research**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters  
Degree at the School of Geography and Environmental Studies,  
Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering, University of Tasmania  
(October 2009)

## **Declaration**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Veness', written in a cursive style.

Tony Veness

16<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

## ABSTRACT

The resources required to acquire high quality scientific data in a marine environment can be great. The complication of acquiring data from a platform which pitches, rolls and heaves makes the challenge even greater. The variability of the weather and sea conditions, along with equipment failures, seemingly conspire against the marine scientist. There is a great need for good quality-control measures, accurate electronic record keeping, and effective voyage management at sea if a good outcome from an expensive sea voyage is to be expected.

Typically, the plethora of navigation, data acquisition, quality control, Geographical Information Systems and databases used at sea on the world's research vessels do not allow an intuitive, holistic, spatial and temporal view of real-time data. "How close are we to the ship track from our last visit to the region?" or "What was the deployment depth of the instrument when we were last at this site two years ago?" are typical questions asked by those undertaking research far from shore. Answering these questions like these, in a timely manner, using systems commonly used on research vessels can be difficult.

This study explored the combination of an open-source spatio-temporal DataBase Management System (DBMS) and Keyhole Markup Language (KML), creating a framework for the storage and exploration of real-time spatio-temporal data at sea. The framework supported multiple concurrent users using Virtual Globe browsers. This study created a methodology, which resulted in a functional software tool, *MARVIN*, using open-source software.

Empirical and modelled datasets were used in conjunction with *MARVIN*, both at sea and in the laboratory. *MARVIN* was found to be able to provide a simple and intuitive 4D (3D + time) real-time view of spatio-temporal datasets, as they were collected at sea.

The key combination of a spatio-temporal DBMS and KML, offered a robust solution for the storage of real-time data, undertaking of Geographical Information System (GIS) operations, and streaming of data to multiple clients, running Virtual Globe browsers such as Google Earth. The techniques implemented also support existing navigation, GIS, and numeric modelling software commonly used on modern research vessels.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Arko Lucieer for his valued support and guidance throughout the coursework and thesis components of my studies. Arko's enthusiasm for research and professional approach sets an example which I and others can only hope to follow.

Dr Jon Osborn provided me with invaluable advice during my four years of part-time study at the Centre for Spatial Information Science, University of Tasmania. Jon's keen eye and sound advice ensured I completed what I needed to complete, when I needed to complete it.

To my partner Jane, whose ability with a red pen is not to be taken lightly, I give many many thanks and promise not to start a PhD, really.....

# Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of contents.....	v
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Tables.....	viii
 <b>Chapter One – Introduction.....</b>	 <b>1</b>
1.1 Motivation.....	4
1.2 Aims and Objectives.....	5
 <b>Chapter Two – Literature Review .....</b>	 <b>7</b>
2.1 Technologies.....	8
2.1.1 Databases.....	10
2.1.2 Web servers.....	15
2.1.3 Map and Geo servers.....	16
2.2 Mainstream methodologies.....	18
2.2.1 Server-side map generation.....	20
2.2.2 Client-side map generation.....	23
2.3 Virtual Globes.....	25
2.4 Specialised 3D and 4D data visualisation software.....	27
 <b>Chapter Three – Methods.....</b>	 <b>29</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	32
3.2 Hardware.....	33
3.2.1 Server.....	33
3.2.2 Clients.....	34
3.3 Software.....	35
3.3.1 Database – PostgreSQL / PostGIS.....	35
3.3.2 Web server - Apache HTTP.....	35
3.3.3 Server-side scripting languages - PHP and Python.....	36
3.3.4 Server-side graphing package – JpGraph.....	37
3.3.5 Server-side map server package – MapServer.....	38
3.3.6 Virtual Globe browser - Google Earth.....	39
3.4 Datasets.....	41
3.4.1 Real-world collected datasets.....	41
3.4.2 Simulated datasets.....	42
3.5 Implementation.....	51
3.5.1 Overview.....	51

3.5.2 Database.....	54
3.5.3 Keyhole Markup Language.....	62
3.5.4 Temporary files.....	65
3.5.5 PHP Programs.....	71
3.5.6 Google Earth.....	73
<b>Chapter Four – Results.....</b>	<b>74</b>
4.1 Introduction to MARVIN.....	75
4.2 Real-time Vessel network link.....	77
4.3 Real-time Charts network link.....	80
4.4 Waypoints network link.....	82
4.5 Instruments network link.....	84
4.6 Historic Vessel Track network link.....	87
4.7 Time Series network link.....	89
4.8 MARVIN Scenarios.....	91
4.8.1 Scenario 1: Distance measurement.....	92
4.8.2 Scenario 2: Determining CTD depth.....	93
4.8.3 Scenario 3: Determining camera sled position and time.....	94
4.8.4 Scenario 4: Contaminated site.....	97
4.9 Summary.....	100
<b>Chapter Five – Discussion.....</b>	<b>101</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	102
5.2 MARVIN versus GIS software.....	106
5.3 MARVIN versus specialised 3D and 4D modelling software.....	108
<b>Chapter Six – Conclusion.....</b>	<b>109</b>
6.1 Major strengths.....	110
6.2 Major challenges.....	111
6.3 Future work.....	112
<b>References.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>118</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Overview of OGC WMS method for server-side web mapping.....	20
Figure 2.2: Overview of a server-side web mapping system – MapServer.....	21
Figure 2.3: Overview of OGC WFS method for client-side mapping.....	24
Figure 2.4: Generalised dataflows for a Google Earth based web mapping system..	27
Figure 3.1: Example of a time series graph generated with JpGraph.....	37
Figure 3.2: MARVIN screen capture showing modelled MBES sonar beams.....	44
Figure 3.3: Sonardyne USBL Range Pro software screen capture.....	47
Figure 3.4: Overview schematic of MARVIN.....	52
Figure 3.5: MARVIN database schema.....	56
Figure 3.6: Example COLLADA models used by MARVIN.....	64
Figure 3.7: Example of JpGraph text images of real-time underway data.....	67
Figure 3.8: Example of JpGraph text images of historic underway data.....	68
Figure 3.9: Examples of PHP Mapscript generated planimetric chart images.....	70
Figure 3.10: MARVIN launcher KML file and PHP programs datapaths.....	72
Figure 3.11: MARVIN.kml.....	73
Figure 4.1: MARVIN's six network link icons.....	75
Figure 4.2: Overview of MARVIN layers, as shown in the Google Earth side bar...	76
Figure 4.3: Real-time Vessel network link icons.....	77
Figure 4.4: Small vessel model.....	77
Figure 4.5: Large vessel model.....	78
Figure 4.6: Modelled multi-beam echo-sounder beams.....	79
Figure 4.7: Real-time Charts network link icons.....	80
Figure 4.8: Three simultaneous views of vessel position in MARVIN.....	81
Figure 4.9: Waypoints network link icons.....	82
Figure 4.10: Example of a pop-up balloon associated with a waypoint.....	83
Figure 4.11: Three examples of simple pop-up balloons available in MARVIN.....	84
Figure 4.12: Instruments network link icons.....	84
Figure 4.13: Determining instrument depth during a historic deployment.....	85
Figure 4.14: Historic Vessel Track network link icons.....	87
Figure 4.15: Historic Vessel Track network link vessel track and drapes.....	88
Figure 4.16: Time series graphs network link icons.....	89
Figure 4.17: 24 hour time series graph and drape.....	90
Figure 4.18: Scenario one: Determining distance using MARVIN.....	92

Figure 4.19: Scenario two: Determining depth using MARVIN.....	93
Figure 4.20: Scenario three: Determining time using MARVIN.....	95
Figure 4.21: Scenario three: Determining time using MARVIN (small scale).....	96
Figure 4.22: Scenario four: Determining spatial correlation using MARVIN.....	99
Figure 5.1: Screen capture of MARVIN showing complete Google Earth GUI.....	101
Figure 5.2: uDig screen capture showing access to MARVIN database.....	105

## List of Tables

Table 2.1: A selection of DBMSs and some geometry storage datatypes.....	15
Table 3.1: MARVIN server computer specifications.....	33
Table 3.2: Client computers running Google Earth specifications.....	34
Table 3.3: MARVIN underway data parameter details.....	42
Table 3.4: Details of MARVIN PHP programs.....	71